

evidence and present it to the House. They were not bound to draw conclusions. In fact it was more than probable that it was the duty of the Committee not to draw any conclusions. After alluding to the action taken by the Committee he said the House had nothing to do with the side issues which had occupied the attention of the House. He thought it would be a great wrong to the intelligence of that House and the country to allow such a report as that to pass upon the journals of the House and remain unquestioned. He thought the hon. member for South Grey had a just cause, and he was of opinion that that gentleman would have neglected his duty to his constituents if he had not brought the matter before the House. In so far as he (Mr. Wood) recollected, from the beginning of the matter down to the present time, the slightest suspicion had not been cast upon Mr. Blake, whose intellect made him a giant in the land, and whose moral character gave him great power. (Hear, hear.) The real question before the House which occupied the attention of his hon. friends was what they should do to pass a stigma upon the Government. They cared not for Mr. Lewis. He was not the game at which they were firing. They cared not for Mr. Oliver. He was not the target at which their arrows were fired; they only desired to stigmatize the Government. The hon. gentleman described in detail the charges made against the gentleman named in the report, and said he believed that Lewis used his power as land valuator to influence voters at elections. He did not think there was any evidence in the report upon which the hon. gentleman should be condemned, and he asked any hon. gentleman in the House if he would like to be condemned upon such evidence. (Hear, hear.) The Commissioner of Public Works had exerted himself a good deal in discussing the political questions of the day. He had left his mark in many of the constituencies, and there was scarcely a single constituency from Cornwall to Sandwich where his voice had not been raised and his power felt. But in his whole political course for the last quarter of a century he challenged hon. members to search the records of Parliament and the files of the newspapers in which were his recorded declarations and say that he ever falsified the great principles of purity which had been the foundation and the strength and the glory of the Reform party. (Loud cheers.) Now, he proposed to look at the report of the Committee. It was proper to enquire what was submitted to the Committee. The graveamen of the charge was that Lewis was authorized by the Government and by Mr. Blake to make certain statements and certain pledges. The facts were important only in so far as they bore upon these charges. The Committee was not appointed to ascertain whether Lewis made these declarations; they knew that before they commenced their investigation. What was important was whether he made those declarations on the authority of the Government or of the Hon. Edward Blake. If he had not such authority, they were no more responsible for what he did than he (Mr. Wood) was. They might as well charge any other hon. gentleman as charge the Commissioner of Public Works and Mr. Blake, if Lewis had no authority from them. The member for Lincoln, being Chairman of the Committee, might have moved the adoption of the report this session. It was quite competent for the leader of the Government to have the report adopted. A long time was given to the member for Lincoln to move the adoption of the report, and when he was formally asked by the member for South Bruce if he intended to make that motion, he gave an evasive answer. With reference to the report, at the best it declared that the crime had not been proven, whereas it should have been a verdict of acquittal. With reference to the first resolution of the Committee it was altogether unfair. Mr. McKellar's and Mr. Blake's names had been mixed up in the affidavits, and it was due to them to have it stated that they were not guilty of the charges made in the affidavits. With reference to the second resolution, which declared that Lewis was a Government land valuator at the time of his interview with Mr. McKellar, it was not worth discussing, because it had not been shown that Mr. McKellar knew that Lewis was at the time a Government land valuator. With respect to the third resolution he would like to know what it meant. Supposing that Lewis had those books, what had that to do with the charge against Mr. Blake or Mr. McKellar? It was simply a little attempt to throw some vague suspicion upon these gentlemen—a stab in the dark. Lewis might have had a pistol with him and been threatening people, but what would the Commissioner of Public Works have to do with that? He would be just as much responsible for that as he was for the use of those books over which

Mr. McKellar had no control whatever. The Committee did not pretend to say that Mr. Blake knew anything about the transaction—nobody ever supposed that he knew anything about it. Suppose Mr. Kerr lived in Hamilton, instead of Toronto, and was connected with the honourable member for East Toronto or some other gentleman, would Mr. Blake's name have been introduced into the matter? Mr. Kerr took the course he did because he was an ardent politician, but he acted on his own responsibility altogether, and Mr. Blake was not to blame for anything he did. The Committee found that Mr. Kerr had met Lewis at the railway station in Hamilton, and they might just as well have found that Lewis had been sent out eighteen months ago to value lands, for there would have been just as much connection. If it had turned out that he had paid his fare on the cars, that would have been a sufficient matter to mention in the report. (Laughter.) Then in regard to the sixth paragraph, was it treating Mr. Blake fair to say that no evidence had been adduced to show that he knew that Lewis was going up to Grey, or that he had had any communication whatever with that party? The reading of that paragraph implied that Mr. Blake knew all about it. There was the poison that was left in that report. Then, suppose Lewis did have an interview with Mr. McKellar at the American Hotel, what did it amount to? That word "interview" was a big one; to many persons it sounded like an appointment; but there was no appointment made by Mr. McKellar to see Lewis, and the inference to be drawn from the wording of the report was, that there was a meeting of these two parties to consult upon the best mode of using the influence of the Crown through Lewis to affect the election. The indirect condemnation of the Commissioner of Public Works was a very great wrong to that gentleman. The eighth paragraph was also strangely worded—that Mr. McKellar knew that Lewis was a land valuator, and that he induced him to go to Grey and use the influence that would give him to secure the election of Mr. Dickey. The member for South Grey did not believe that himself. Mr. McKellar knew that Lewis was an active politician, and that from the acquaintances he had in Grey he might help to settle the election there. There would be nothing wrong in that, for Mr. Dickey had persons canvassing for him in all parts of the riding, and so had the hon. member for Grey. He (the speaker) did his best in favour of that honourable gentleman, and thought he was doing it honourably. Down to the hour that the Government of which he was a member had an autonomy, he used all the force and influence of which he was possessed to sustain it; but when it was defeated, he was defeated along with it and retired, and he meant to keep retired until he could find a wider sphere of power. (Hear, hear.) With respect to the last clause of the report, which excluded the "other members of the Government," he said that that was done with the intention of showing up the hon. Messrs. Blake and McKellar in a strong objective point of view. He contended that the resolutions of the hon. Premier should be carried, and that any hon. gentleman who voted against them would do so against the strongest evidence that the charges made had been not only not proved, but that the gentlemen assailed had been relieved from all blame in the matter. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. RYKERT said that there had been only one member of the Committee who, upon the suggestion of the Ministry, desired to alter the Report of the Committee, and that alteration had been very light indeed. The member for Essex stated that if he altered the Report he would make it still stronger. When he (Mr. R.) moved to have the report received by the House, Mr. Blake burst the question by insisting that two days' notice should be given, well knowing that the session would then be over. No charge of connection with the action of Lewis had ever been made against Mr. Blake, and it was a mere subterfuge to say that such was the case. In regard to the objection taken by Mr. Wood to the wording of the last paragraph of the report, he said that the report had been constructed as an answer to a memorandum handed to him by Mr. Blake, in which several points were given on which he thought findings should be given by the Committee, and that the last clause was a finding on the last point suggested. It was impossible to tell what took place at the interview between Messrs. McKellar and Lewis, but any one who weighed the facts of the matter would believe so old a politician as Mr. McKellar did not dismiss Mr. Lewis without knowing what he was going to do. He then referred to the equivocations in which he said Mr. Oliver had indulged in giving his evidence before the Committee. He might have been censured by the Committee for that equivocation, but it